

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

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R 042100Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8510

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FOLLOWING RECD FROM RIO DE JANEIRO SENT ACTION BRASILIA
INFO SAO PAULO, RECIFE, PORTO ALERE, BELEM, USIS BELO HORIZONTE
DATED 3 APR 75 BEING REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO:

QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE RIO DE JANEIRO 1083

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, BR

SUBJECT: END OF PRIOR CENSORSHIP AND SEIZURE OF PASQUIM

1. DURING LAST WEEK OF MARCH GEISEL GOVERNMENT ABRUPTLY
ENDED FIVE YEARS OF PRIOR CENSORSHIP TO LEFT OF CENTER,
SATIRICAL, WEEKLY TABLOID PASQUIM. JOURNAL WAS FOUNDED
IN 1969; SINCE 1970 IT HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO PRIOR
CENSORSHIP CARRIED OUT IN BRASILIA. JOURNAL OBLIGED
TO SEND EACH WEEK TO BRASILIA BETWEEN TWO AND THREE
TIMES AS MUCH MATERIAL (TEXT, CARTOONS AND PHOTOS)
AS NEEDED FOR EACH ISSUE. CENSORS RETURNED ALL MATERIAL
WITH CENSORED ITEMS CROSSED OUT. THIS FIVE YEAR CENSORSHIP
CARRIED OUT ON POLITICAL GROUNDS PRESUMABLY UNDER
EXTRADORDINARY POWERS OF AI-5 RATHER THAN UNDER NORMAL
CENSORSHIP STATUTE WHICH SEEKS TO PROTECT PUBLIC MORALS.

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2. FOLLOWING WEEK (MARCH 31) MINISTER OF JUSTICE

FALCAO ORDERED FIRST UNCENSORED ISSUE OF PASQUIM, (NO. 300, MARCH 29 TO APRIL 4, 1975) SEIZED UNDER NORMAL CENSORSHIP STATUTE FOR CONTAINING MATERIAL CONSIDERED OBSCENE AND OFFENSIVE TO PUBLIC MORALS. MINISTER ALSO ORDERED POLICE INQUIRY TO ESTABLISH CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE OFFENSE. ACCORDING TO PRESS STORIES ON THE SEIZURE, SOME OF THE MATERIAL CONSIDERED MOST OFFENSIVE BY THE GOVERNMENT WAS A CARTOON ABOUT MRS. JACQUELINE ONASSIS AND AN ARTICLE BY MILLOR FERNANDEZ, PASQUIM'S DIRECTOR, COMMENTING IN GROSS TERMS ON THE LUCRATIVENESS OF HER SIX-YEAR MARRIAGE TO THE DECEASED GREEK MAGNATE. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE JUSTICE MINISTRY ALSO ORDERED THE SEIZURE OF THE APRIL 5 ISSUE OF MANCHETE BECAUSE IT CONTAINED NUDE PHOTOGRAPHS OF MRS. ONASSIS TAKEN BY A HIDDEN PHOTOGRAPHER ON SKORPIOS, ALSO CONSIDERED OFFENSIVE TO PUBLIC MORALS. WHEREAS THE PASQUIM SEIZURE WAS ORDERED THE DAY BEFORE IT WAS TO GO ON SALE, THE ORDER TO CONFISCATE THE OFFENDING ISSUE OF MANCHETE WAS PROMULGATED ONLY SEVERAL DAYS AFTER THE MAGAZINE REACHED THE NEWSSTANDS. THE RESULT WAS THAT VERY FEW COPIES OF MANCHETE ACTUALLY WERE SEIZED.

3. ACCORDING TO MILLOR FERNANDEZ AND OTHER INFORMED PRESS SOURCES, THE REAL TARGET OF THE SEIZURE OF PASQUIM WAS A STRONG EDITORIAL BY FERNANDEZ DETAILING THE JOURNAL'S PROBLEMS WITH CENSORSHIP. THESE PROBLEMS INCLUDED: A SEVERE DROP IN READERSHIP (FERNANDEZ CLAIMED A DROP FROM TWO HUNDRED TO ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND CIRCULATION IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF CENSORSHIP; SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE PRESENT CIRCULATION TO BE ABOUT FIFTY THOUSAND), AND HARASSMENT OF THE PASQUIM STAFF WHEN CENSORSHIP INITIATED (E.G. POLICE INTERROGATION OF MOST OF THEM AND JAILING OF TEN EDITORS FOR TWO MONTHS FOLLOWED BY THEIR RELEASE AND THE SUBSEQUENT SHELVEING OF THE INQUIRY). FERNANDEZ ALSO MADE THE POINT THAT LACK OF PRIOR CENSORSHIP DOES NOT MEAN BRAZILIAN PRESS FREE TO PRINT WHAT IT WISHES AND REMINDED HIS READERS THAT SEVERAL BRAZILIAN JOURNALS STILL SUBJECT TO PRIOR CENSORSHIP. THE SEIZED ISSUE OF PASQUIM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WAS ESPECIALLY LARGE IN COMMEMORATION OF THE ENDING OF CENSORSHIP (40 PAGES VERSUS THE USUAL 28). ALTHOUGH VAST MAJORITY OF COPIES OF THE ISSUE WERE SEIZED, IT WAS STILL ON SALE IN A FEW RIO DE JANEIRO NEWSPAPER STANDS TWO DAYS AFTER THE SEIZURE ORDER. SINCE THE JOURNAL DEPENDS ON SALES IN THE STANDS RATHER THAN SUBSCRIPTION, IT HAS BEEN DEALT A SEVERE ECONOMIC BLOW. FERNANDEZ ESTIMATES HIS LOSSES AT ABOUT TWO

HUNDRED THOUSAND CRUZEIROS. HE EXPECTS A DESULTORY
POLICE AND JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION SINCE THE GOVERNMENT'S
OBJECTIVE ALREADY ATTAINED.

4. COMMENT: THE GEISEL GOVERNMENT HAS ONCE AGAIN
SHOWN THAT DESPITE A COMMITMENT TO AND PROGRESS TOWARD
DISTENCAO THIS PROCESS WILL TAKE PLACE AT ITS OWN PACE.
THE GOVERNMENT ALSO DEMONSTRATED ITS ABILITY, AS IN THE
CHICO PINTO CASE, TO ACHIEVE ITS PURPOSE WITHOUT USING
AI-5. NEVERTHELESS, DESPITE THE SEIZURE OF ONE ISSUE,
PASQUIM, AS OF THIS WRITING, HAS BEEN REALEASED FROM
PRIOR CENSORSHIP AND, IN THE NET, THAT IS A STEP FORWARD.
ONLY OPINIAO, TRIBUNA DA IMPRENSA, VEJA, AND THE CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESAN PAPER O SAO PAULO REMAIN SUBJECT TO PRIOR
CENSORSHIP IN BRAZIL AND PRESS SOURCES HARBOR MUTED
BUT INCREASED HOPE THAT THEY TOO WILL BE RELEASED.
DEXTER
UNQUOTE
CRIMMINS

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